

Mr. H. N. New Mr. Bishop of Ser...

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Mr. OFFLEY's
SERMON
ON THE
Sudden Death of the Rev^d Mr. Shaw.

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Mr. OFFLEY

SERMON



ON THE

Sudden Death of the Revd Mr. Spence

[REDACTED]

Warning given to the Flock, by the Sudden Death of a Good Shepherd.

A
SERMON

Preach'd in the
Parish Church at *Soulderne* in *Oxfordshire*,

DECEMBER the 8th, 1706.

In Memory of the REVEREND
Mr. Jeffery Shaw, B. D.
Late Rector of that Parish, and sometime
Fellow of *St. John's College* in *Cambridge*;
Who Died whilst he was in the Church
at Evening-Prayer, Nov. 17. 1706.

By **WILL. OFFLEY**, Prebendary of *Lincoln*,
and late Fellow of *Kings-College* at *Cambridge*.

The Second Edition.

*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed
lest he fall, 1 Cor. 10. 12.*

L O N D O N: Printed for *W. Rogers* at the Sun against
St. Dunstan's Church in *Fleetstreet*. MDCCVII.

Warning given to the Flock, by the Sub-
den Deans of a Good Shepherd.

SERMON

Preach'd in the

Parish Church at Southwark in the Parish of St. Andrew.

DECEMBER the 21. 1706.

In Memory of the REVEREND

Mr. Jeffery Shaw, B. D.

Late Rector of the Parish, and sometime
Fellow of St. John's College in Cambridge;



Who Died whilst he was in the Church
at Evening Prayer, Nov. 27. 1706.

By WILL. OFFLEY, Prebendary of Lincoln,
and late Fellow of King's College in Cambridge.

The Second Edition.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed
lest he fall, 1 Cor. 10. 12.

LONDON: Printed for W. Rogers at the Gun against
St. Dunstons Church in Fleetstreet. MDCCVII.

T O T H E
Inhabitants of the Parish of Soulderne,
in the County of Oxford.

Good Neighbours,

IT is much wish'd, that we would all so Wait for God in the Way of his Judgments, as that we might, in some measure, answer the End and Design of his Scattering his Afflicting Providences amongst us, by our growing wiser and better by them : But 'tis greatly to be suspected, that those various Calamities which have befallen us in this Promiscuous Abode and Lottery of the World, have not had that due Influence upon our Hearts and Minds, as they ought to have ; and therefore we presume, that the Almighty is sometimes mov'd to arise more remarkable in Judgment, and by the most surprizing Instances of his Power, to teach us all how frail we are, and how short our Time is ! By those becoming and Religious Expressions which I have heard many of you let fall in Discourse, since the Sudden Death of your late Faithful Pastor, I am inclin'd to think that you are so sensibly awaken'd, that you do not want many Motives ~~for~~ to a-

nimate and quicken you in the Discharge of those respective Duties of Religion, which are able, at all seasonable Opportunities, to teach us all so to number our days, as that we may apply our hearts unto Wisdom.

However some may possibly be induced to think and act, it is certainly no unsafe thing for us, whilst we are here, for to Reflect often and seriously upon Death: The great Advantage and Necessity of so Important and Religious a Contemplation, I have, in this ensuing Discourse, endeavour'd to represent to you.

When I first Preached it before you, my main Intention was to imprint it in your Memories, and on your Hearts; and I hope my Design is not altogether frustrated, since you have desir'd me to Preach it again to you from the Press. It waits on you in a very plain Dress, in the Habit of a Mourner, which is most agreeable to the present Occasion of your Tears and Sorrow, which I was Witness to, when you attended at the late Funeral Solemnity, and express'd your Lamentable Concern for the Dead. But whatever this Sermon wants in outward Ornament, I trust will be found to be made up by my sincere Endeavours to do you, and others, all the Good I can. Wherefore, according to my Office, "I shall not be unmindful to Pray to God, for a
" Bles-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

iii

" Blessing upon the Universal Church of Christ ;
" That he would be her constant Defence against the
" Face of all her Enemies, and evermore shield her
" from all Danger ; and that he would deliver you
" and every Individual Member of that Sacred
" Body, of which Christ is the Head, from
" Sudden Death.

I am

Your Affectionate Servant,

From Middleton-Stoney,
Decemb. 20. 1706.

William Offley.



December 13. 1706.

WE whose Names are Subscrib'd, Return our Thanks to the Reverend Mr. William Offey, for his Sermon Preach'd at Soulderne the 8th Instant; and We desire him to Print the same, as a Lasting Testimony of the Great Respect We bear to the Memory of our late Minister, the Reverend Mr. Jeoffery Shaw Deceas'd.

John Dodwell.
John Browne.
James Browne.
Esau Clark.
Matthew Herne.

John King.
William Bower.
George Bower.
Robert Bignell.

JOB

JOB XIV. 14. The last Part.

All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my Change come.

WHICH Words holy Job is, in this Chapter of my Text, recorded to have utter'd in the days of his earthly Pilgrimage, when those severe and repeated Miseries which beset him, were a Means not only to try his Faith, but patiently to dispose him to submit himself at all times to God's Divine Will, whilst he suffer'd in his own proper *Person*, in his *Family*, and in his vast *Substance*, which made him esteem'd *the greatest of all the men of the East*. Chap. 1.
Ver. 3.

And as this sudden Turn of Fortune, and the calamitous Condition of this Good Man's Life, did rather Confirm, than otherwise Shake or Unsettle that Confidence which he repos'd in God, *who cannot forget to be gracious*; so in like manner, did he make the best and wisest Constructions of God's Dispensations at all times; even such as were not only serviceable to support him under the present Weight of his Afflictions, but such as wou'd stand him in stead at the last, when his Change and Dissolution shou'd approach, and those Eyes of his, that

A Sermon on the Death

that then beheld the Light, shou'd soon be clos'd, and sink into Night and Darknefs.

In every Period and Condition of Life, all the days of this Mortal State, we have here *Job's* Resolution of being Watchful, and upon his Guard, patiently expecting the coming of his Change; that is, "Either till God shou'd in Mercy look on him, and put a stop to the Current of his present Misfortunes, by restoring him to a plentiful Fortune again in this Life; or else till God shou'd think fit to order his last and great Change to come by Death; *Which every man living shall see*, as the Prophet *David* affirms.

Pfal. 89.
ver. 48.

Luke 21.
ver. 19.

My Text then records a pious and serious Resolution of one *who in his patience possess'd his Soul*, and whose Mind was fix'd *upon his latter end*. Now how well such a Resolution may become us, (my Brethren, of the like Composition, of the same Dust and Ashes) to embrace and take up, I suppose that none of you are at this day ignorant: Alas! if we attentively weigh and consider things as we ought, we shall soon be convinced that the World here doth abound with Sorrow and Tribulation as much now, as ever it did in the Ages that are past; as well as the Just and Upright ones, who heretofore suffered, *and were shamefully intreated*, we in this Generation are worn away with very Trouble, and are almost continually alarm'd and surpriz'd by the speedy Harbingers of Death: We alas! are bereaved of our dearest and best Friends and intimate Acquaintance, in the day that we thought not of such a Calamity; yea, in a Moment, even whilst we are Conversing together, we are liable to be separated, and to *be carried down into the chambers of death*. And what is all this, but to awaken

ken us, and if possible to beget in us a due Sense of our own Frailty? how *that in the midst of life we are in death*; and for ought that we know, our Change is now near at hand.

Yea, as you saw it was the sad and deplorable Fate of your late Worthy and Beloved Minister in this Place, we may (God knoweth, and he only) be hurried away from hence, and Die, whilst our Hearts with our Hands are lifted up to Heaven, as his were; whose sudden Departure hence in the Lord was not a little surprizing, even to those that were at some remote Distance, when the Melancholy Report reach'd them; much more, may I presume, did it affect you of this Parish, who were then met together in this appointed Place for God's Publick Worship, and beheld the bloody and dismal Spectacle.

This is both Natural as well as Religious for me to suppose: For hearken (I beseech you my Friends) a little: Do not we all hear, how the Sheep Bleat and Mourn at this time, when the Shepherd is taken away from them? Oh! how sensible is the Loss of such a One, *that continually enter'd in by the Door*; who is affirm'd by Christ himself, *to be the true shepherd of the* John 10. *sheep*: The Death of such a Shepherd must without all ver. 2. peradventure be surpassingly great, and much to be lamented.

Having had a long Acquaintance with *this Good Man*, now gone (I hope) to rest with God, I cou'd not enter into this Holy Place, without paying his Memory so small a Tribute as I now do, of that sincere Friendship I had for him; neither can I think it unseasonable to remind you again and again of his *sudden Death*; which was a Warning no doubt sent to the Sheep and

to the Shepherds also in general. Oh ! that the Shepherds then wou'd hereby be instructed, and for the future redouble their Care, *taking heed to themselves, and unto their doctrine.* And my hearty Desire and Prayer to God is ; " That the Sheep would give ear, and hear-ken to the Voice of their *true Shepherds* ; that they " may no longer Err, nor go astray from the Ways of " God and his saving Truth, as those Sheep that are lost ; " but that they continue stedfast in the Faith of
 1 Tim. 4. " Christ ; *Laying up in store for themselves a good founda-*
 ver. 16. *tion against the time to come, that they may lay hold on*
 1 Tim. 6. *eternal life ;* as St. Paul exhorted his beloved Timothy :
 ver. 19.

Mr. Shaw died as he was reading those words in the Second Lesson.

Rev. 1. *he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* And I have al-
 ver. 10. so been told, That he spoke those Words of the Apo-
 stle which I have here cited, with such an Emphasis and Strength of Elocution, that he seem'd to call up your Attention more than ordinary, at the very Minute in which he died : So powerful was the Word of God in his Mouth ! Thus to the last, *did the Priests lips keep knowledge.*

Certainly then (my Brethren) you cannot well forget these Last and Dying Words of Exhortation, which you then heard, and I have now repeated ; since they are of such great Use to strengthen and fix all our Thoughts and Meditations upon Death, and our Change by it ; whilst they Teach us duly *to wait all the days of our appointed time* : We stand not in need of many Motives to this Duty ; daily Experience calls both aloud and

and earnestly to us all, for to be Vigilant and Circumspect ; and every one's Change that hath already happen'd, is a visible Forerunner of that Dissolution which waits us all. The best of Mankind, though never so wise, and enrich'd with Knowledge and Understanding, cannot tell *what a day may bring forth. Ye know not what* Prov. 27.
shall be on the morrow : For what is your Life ? It is even a v. 1.
vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth Jam. 4.
away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall v. 15.
live, and do this or that.

Alas ! in this valley of Care and of Death , we are in the dark, ready to stumble and fall : Here we cannot foresee Events, nor tell those Things that shall hereafter come to pass. None of us do know what may befall us here in *this House of Prayer* ; or when we go out of it, and return to our respective Habitations : Death may Arrest and carry us off in any Place , or at any Time appointed and ordained of God our Creator : And for ever Blessed and Happy shall we be, if we are ready and prepared for *Our Great and Certain Change*, whenever it shall please God, in whose Hands are the Issues of Life and Death, to order it ; whether it shall be in *the Morning, at Mid-day, or in the Evening*. But here let us consider ; Though Death is acceptable and welcome at all Times, and in all Places, to a good Christian, who has waited for it, and before-hand endeavour'd to make his Peace with God and his Neighbour ; yet certainly we cannot but account those very Happy, *whose Change* happeneth whilst they are more immediately in God's Divine Presence , having his Saving Word in their Mouths, and their Souls lifted up in Prayer towards God, at that very Instant in which
 God

God is pleas'd to require them. Oh ! how Blest and Happy are all they presum'd to be, *who are departed hence in the Lord ; and have thus been found of God in Well-doing !*

Thus your Faithful and Good Shepherd (O that all the Churches of God did with us this Day call to their Remembrance his lamented Fall !) was taken from amongst you. In the Morning, he, with you, made humble Confession of his Sins here to God : Here it was that he carefully fed you (his beloved Flock) with *the Bread of Eternal Life*, the pure and healing Word of God : And here he pronounced the Benefit of Absolution and Remission of Sins, to all that *truly Repented, and Believed the Gospel*. And in the Evening, as he was here standing before you, and Reading the same Sanctifying Word of Truth, and of God, according to his Sacred and Ministerial Office, *his Change came ; ———* * *He bowed, he*

* Mr. Shaw fell out of the Reading-Desk into the Isle of the Church ; and his Skull was shatter'd by the Fall, so that he died immediately.

fell ; where he bowed, he fell down dead ; and then the Word of God ceas'd to be heard any more from his Mouth, as it us'd to be, according to the most genuine Interpretations, with great Clearness, and in Accents pleasing and delightful to all whom he Preached so constantly unto in this Sanctuary of God.

And here I might enlarge a little, and give you a Character of *his Great Learning*, which *the University in general, and his own Colledge in particular*, have had many *Specimens* of : But I forbear ——— from a Sense of my

my own Inability to describe that which is enough for me to admire.

To return then, after this short Digression. ——— It was not many Hours before his sudden Fall happen'd, when he from hence * Preached, and exhorted you that were then present, "To prepare for a more lasting and durable Place of Happiness, than is here in this World "to be found;" His Text (his own *Funeral Sermon* I may call his Enlargement upon it) was this;

* In his Sermon in the Morning.

I have seen an end of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

Psal. 119.
v. 96.

"By which Words, the Prophet *David* is interpreted to represent to us the Fluctuating and Transitory Condition of this present World; how that the greatest Perfection which this Life is capable of, is finite and narrow, so that we receive no real Satisfaction from it. This occasion'd the *Psalmist* to testify, as he doth in this Portion of Scripture, that profound Respect which he had for the law of God, his holy Word; which he declares is of a much larger Extent, broad enough to make him Happy to all Eternity in Heaven above; whither, we hope, our Brother and Servant of Christ is lately gone; since he continued Faithful to the last, and Dy'd in the Performance of that most Divine and Excellent Service of his Lord and Master; and here also, in this Holy Place of God's Adoration and Worship, where his eyes had often seen the Salvation of God; but now has God let him depart in peace. And you (my Brethren) were Witnesses of these Things, that I now rehearse; and God

"grant

“grant that you may all ever be calling to mind the
 “Wonderful Works, which God, by his mighty Power,
 “has made known in the Earth; but especially this Last
 “Remarkable Judgment which he has wrought among
 “you!

Isa. 26.
 v. 9.

The Evangelical Prophet, long before the Coming of the Messiah, inform'd the People of old, *That when Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness*: And most certain, it is our Duty as well as Advantage, who survive so many terrible Instances of Mortality, for to Meditate upon Death, and seriously to make Provision for our Change, so long as we continue in this Natural and Corruptible State of Human and Frail Nature. Which that we may both regularly and religiously do; I shall proceed, from the good Resolution of *Job* in my Text,

First, To represent and show the Necessity of *our Waiting, as he did, for our Change, all the days of our appointed time.*

Secondly, I shall endeavour to enforce the Observation of this Religious and Christian Duty, by reminding you of that great Advantage which it will afford to every one that seriously dischargeth it as he ought to do.

As •

As to the First of these Particulars, The Thoughts and Meditations of our Change by Death are so absolutely necessary, that they are the very Basis and Foundation of our Spiritual Lives, of our Pious Exercises, and of all Christian Graces and Virtues. So fully convinced and persuaded was Job of this, that he elsewhere confesseth ——— *I know, thou O God wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* As if he had said; “Death is all ways in my View; at that Mark I level all my Words and Actions. And here I think it not unsuitable to my Purpose in hand, to recommend to you the usual Practice of a Wise Commander, who is in History related to have “Disciplin’d and Train’d his Soldiers, with as much Care and Diligence *in time of Peace as in War.* The Uncertainty of Events, and the Perfidiousness of an Enemy, many times prevail’d with him to be upon his Guard, and to be ready and prepar’d for the worst, though no real or apparent Danger did then offer it self. And if we look into the Holy Gospel, we shall find *our Blessed Lord, the Great Captain of our Salvation,* commanding us his Soldiers and Servants to our Arms: *To take unto us his whole Armour, the breast-plate of Righteousness, the shield of Faith, the helmet of Salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance, that we may be ready: For the Son of Man cometh at an hour when we think not.*

Chap. 30.
v. 23.

Eph. 6. v. 13,
14, — 16, 17,
18.

Luke 12. v. 40.

“Than

“Than our Change (as one observes) nothing
 “is more certain ; than the Hour thereof , no-
 “thing more uncertain. *It is not for us to know*
 Acts 1. 7. *the times or the seasons , which the Father hath put*
 Rev. 1. v. 18. *in his own power : He it is that , as the Divine St.*
John declares , hath the Keys of Hell and of
Death.

“We have it reported of some Persons , that
 “they did not fear Death , but the Kind of
 “Death :” For to Die , to be depriv’d of this
 short and Animal Life , is nothing ; but to Die
 well or ill , is of the greatest Moment and
 Consequence to the Souls and Bodies of Man-
 1 Cor. 16. 1. kind. *Watch therefore (as St. Paul writes and*
 1 Pet. 5. v. 8. *exhorts) and stand stedfast in the Faith ; quit*
you like men , be strong. Because your adversary
the devil , as a roaring lion , walketh about , seek-
 1 Thes. 5. 2. *ing whom he may devour. Amidst the greatest*
Delights , and the pleasures we enjoy here but for
a season , Death may shew it self : And the
Holy Ghost compares it to a Thief , that comes
and steals upon us. “ Since then it is so uncer-
tain in what Place , or at what time Death
“ expects us ; let us (my Friends and Brethren)
“ wait for it , and expect it in every Place ,
“ and at all Times and Seasons. It is the com-
mendable Happiness of Good Men , that they
do so wait for their Change , that they are
not surpriz’d by it : By Watchings and Fastings
often , they try and examine themselves ; pro-
ving their own Works , and labouring all they
can for to purify and cleanse their Consciences from all
those Deformities which blemish and hurt the Soul.

No-

Nothing is of greater Concern to them, than the Fear of being off their Guard, not having (as they ought to do) sufficiently begg'd God's Remission of Sins; whose Divine Justice we must all seek to satisfy and appease, *before we go hence, and be no more seen.*

In the time of the Law, the Israelites were enjoin'd to eat the *Passover in haste, with their loyns girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands*, for fear of the destroying Angel's approaching: In allusion to which, we have our Saviour Christ in the Gospel reveal'd exhorting his little flock, and Disciples of his Kingdom, *to have their loyns also girt about, and their lights burning, like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately.* And blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching, and waiting for their change. Alas! how regardless were Sodom and Gomorrah? For when Brimstone and Fire rain'd from the Lord out of Heaven, to burn up and to consume those Cities, so full of all manner of Wickedness and Prophanation, they remain'd yet in their Impieties, and would not so much as think of their fatal Overthrow and approaching Change. We find our Saviour upbraids one in the Gospel, who was foolishly *boasting himself in the multitude of his riches, and promising to himself many years; when that very night his soul was requir'd of him; his Change came: And then, whose shall those things be,*

Exod. 12. v. 11.
Luk. 12. v. 35, ver. 36, ver. 37.
Gen. 9. v. 24.
Luk. 12. v. 23.

C 2 which

which he had provided? So vain and fruitless is it to lay up Treasure here, and at the same time to be Poor and not Rich towards God! Wherefore then let the Miscarriages of others be a Warning to us; and let the Uncertainty of the Time of our Dissolution, be a means to quicken our Care and Diligence; and now, *while it is call'd to day*, cause us seriously to consider our latter end, and wait for it.

Matt. 25.v.3.

Exod. 14. v.
28, 29.

Oh! Let us not trifle away our Time, and with *those careless ones in the Gospel*, have our Oyl to buy, and our Lamps to trim, when we shou'd go forth to meet the Lord: Then, oh! then 'twill be much too late for us to prepare and get ready; then will our Hearts fail us, we shall then Tremble and be afraid; yea, we shall be full as Disconsolate and wretched as *that Tyrant of a King, Pharoah*, was, who would never regard the Judgments that befell him, 'till the hand of Heaven was upon him to destroy him; then indeed he would fain have fled back from *Israel* which he pursued, but it was then past all hope for him to escape: The Waters of the *Great Deep* soon return'd and clos'd together, and he and all his Host were drown'd in the Sea.

Thus are we taught and instructed by the Uner-
ring Word of God, contained both in the *Old and New Testament*, how requisite and necessary it is for us, in every State and Condition of Human Life, to wait for our Change. And so I pass in the

Second

Second Place, To endeavour to enforce the Observation of this Religious and Christian Duty of our waiting for Death, by reminding you of that great Advantage which it will afford to every one that seriously dischargeth it as he ought to do.

And the Advantage will appear in short from these following Considerations.

I. Our serious calling to mind, and reflecting upon Death and the Consequences of it, will be of good use in suppressing Vice, and putting a speedy stop to every sinful Course; 'twill at all times serve to chastise and check both our Exorbitant Lusts, and Extravagant Wills, which are so apt upon all occasions for to break loose and hurry us away into the Commission of that which is Evil, and highly offensive to God and good Men: For all they that are careful, and wait for God, and keep his Commandments, are not so expos'd and open to Temptations, as they daily are, who seem to retain no just Ideas of God's Providence, and scarce have God in any of their Thoughts; *who mind earthly things.*

Those that have their Affections rais'd after a more sublime and heavenly Manner, whose Meditations are employ'd *upon Death, and Judgment after Death*, are not so easily importun'd, and drawn away by any of the Allurements or Enticements to Sin; they have a very small esteem for the outward Gaeties and momentary Pageantry of this Life; so that

that they can with ease pass them by whilst they wait for their Change, and with Joy reflect upon it, as it is a passage and entrance into *life eternal, immortal, in the highest heavens.*

We are all I believe very sensible of the Charge and Care which we are at for to remove any natural Disease, that chanceth for to seize the Body; We soon repair for Advice to the Men of Art and Skill; and amongst their Prescriptions, we are directed often to change the Air, and breathe in our Native Country, where the Climate is probably more Temperate, and agreeable to our weak Nature, and sickly Disposition; so careful are we as not to neglect any of those Rules that are given us for some probable Good, and ensuing Benefit: And whilst we thus express our Care for the Preservation of our frail Bodies, shall we be so Remiss and Unwise, as to be less solicitous for the future Safety and Health of our Souls? Alas! none can deny but that they are Sick, and languish, being much indispos'd through Diseases, and a complication of malignant Evils; all which is soon remedied by a timely Application of our selves to *Christ Jesus, the great Physician of Souls*; and by Faith drawing nearer and nearer to that heavenly country that is above, where do live the souls of just men made perfect, after they are happily deliver'd from these earthly Prisons.

2. It is of Advantage to us, thus to be waiting for our Change, and studying how we may die well; since such serious Reflections are faithful Remem-

membrancers of our mean Extraction and Condition here below : *For out of the ground (as God assur'd our Fall'n Parent Adam) we were at first taken; dust we are, and unto dust we shall return.* Hence then let the lofty and proud learn to be somewhat humbled, and not to have such an overvaluing Opinion of themselves, and of their own Actions; For what are we? Or what were our Fathers before us? Is there any thing in our Frame and Composition, that is so much more remarkable and excellent, as to make us set at naught our Brethren and Companions here, who are as Pilgrims and Strangers, travelling to a better Country? What shou'd move us to despise others, and (as the manner of some is) to be ^{superstitious} Superstitious and Vain-glorious, *puffed up for one against another?* There is neither Reason or Religion in this; *For when God with rebukes (as David saith) doth correct us for our iniquity, he maketh our beauty to consume away like a moth: Surely every man is vanity.* Gen. 3. v. 19.
1 Cor. 4. v. 6.
Psal. 39. 11.

3. By thus waiting for our Change, we are animated against all Despondency and tormenting Apprehensions of Death: For whilst we reflect upon the Certainty of it, how that *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment;* and that none in this Course of Nature are exempted from such a Change; what ground is there, or can any Reason (my Beloved) be given or assign'd, for you or me to dread and slavishly fear That; which is common and belongs to All as Men, *who are born to die?* Heb. 9. v. 27.
1 Cor. 15. v. 31.
In the Apostle's Sense, we may truly affirm,
That

That we *die all daily*: From the Cradle to the Grave, in every Period and Stanza of Life we, meet with one Instance or another of Mortality; so that every one of us may now say to his Soul; *Be not thou then cast down, O my soul, and be thou no longer disquieted within me! since death, the death of the righteous is to be desir'd and pray'd for*: Yea, we hear a Voice from Heaven commanding us to Write, *Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

Rev. 14. v. 13.

In a few Words, e're I draw to a Conclusion: If we make a Stand a little, and take but a very short survey of this World's Goods which are before us, we may soon be made acquainted with that Anxiety and Carefulness which continually is attending on us; so that we may readily subscribe to this Divine Truth and Affirmation of the Prophet; *how that many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* It is God that saveth us, and through the Gate of Death bids us joyfully to enter into his Rest.

Psal. 34. v. 19.

Our Lord, who in Compassion to our Infirmities took our Nature upon him, tells us, *that tribulation is to be the Lot and Portion of our Inheritance here; Cares and Sorrow will creep in, and intermix themselves with the chiefest Blessings we enjoy; Neither is there to be found any solid and lasting Peace in this World; for if that*

Joh. 16. v. 33.

that desirable Blessing be but so much as named only in the Earth, presently the Trumpet is lifted up, and is ready to sound to the Battel; wars, and rumors of wars become our Melancholy Entertainment.

And here, from this short Glance upon those outward Miseries which so Disquiet and Disorder us in this Life, I beg of you to retire a while into your own selves, and to shut out the World, and silently to commune with your Hearts; and then tell me, if you are not soon convinced, that there also is Matter enough, without looking any farther, for to employ and exercise the Devotion of your Souls, and to cause even Tears to flow and run down apace from your Eyes. There you are sad witnesses to those innumerable Evils which war against the Soul; There you may see how many and great Conflicts do happen between the spirit and the flesh continually; no sooner is one insulting Vice brought under and subdued, but instantly another starts up, and if not timely oppos'd and resisted, 'tis more than probable that 'twill get the mastery over us, and we shall be vanquish'd and overcome by it: And all this is occasion'd by the lust- Gal. 5.v. 17.
ings of the Flesh against the Spirit, which are contrary the one to the other. So that (as the Apostle writes to the Galatians) we cannot do the things that we would in peace, be our Minds never so virtuously inclin'd to that which is Good. Therefore we are by our excellent Liturgy directed to pray to God, for to give us that peace which the world here cannot give. For neither from within or from without us, as I have here hinted, is there any true Rest to be found or discover'd for the Soul, till God in Mercy calls it away
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from hence, and gives it a place of Joy, in an Eternity of Bliss and Glory; which Joy nothing can ever discompose, *nor can man take it from us.*

He that by the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge took an Inventory of all things in this lower Orb, pronounced *all to be vanity.* And lo! a greater than Solomon, in the Gospel, *is at hand, even Jesus, the Son of the most High God:* Who when he found his Disciples to be sorrowful at the Apprehensions which they had of his sudden Departure from them; he said unto 'em, *If ye lov'd me, ye wou'd rejoyce, because I go to my Father.*

Oh! then let us consider how Blessed are those that are gone to find Rest for their Souls in Heaven: Who would not gladly be unloos'd and set free from these Chains and Fetters wherewithal the World so fast binds us, for to go to Christ's Father, and our Father; to his God and our God? Thus then to die (with the Apostle) *is great Gain.*

4. By our constant waiting for our Change, our Faith and Hope in the Promises of the Gospel will be more and more Ratified and Confirmed: We shall from hence be fill'd with greater Alacrity and Cheerfulness to *run this race that is set before us.* And all our Desires will be enlarged after Heaven; so that we shall *set our affections upon the things that are above;* and evermore be ready to enter into that Everlasting Rest, which God will give to all that wait and seek for it, as they are taught by his Holy Word.

Thus shall we be *changed into the same image with God, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of God.* And this will be a means likewise more solemnly to bring us all to consider (at this particular Season)

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of the coming of Christ, and the doctrine that he, at his appearance, reveal'd so fully to this lower world, when he so wonderfully Redeem'd us. By his own Meritorious Death he hath pluck'd out the sting of death; so that we now may Triumph and say; O death! where ^{1 Cor. 15. v.} is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be ^{56,} to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord ^{ver. 55,} Jesus Christ. Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ^{ver. 57.} stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

To Conclude, let us Pray,

Almighty God, give us Grace that we may cast away the Works of Darkness, and put upon us the Armour of Light, now in the time of this Mortal Life, (in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great Humility) that in the last Day, when he shall come again, in his Glorious Majesty, to judge both the Quick and Dead, we may rise to the Life Immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost now and ever. Amen.

1. Sunday in Advent.

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